

Purchasing a Puppy

Purchasing a new puppy can be an exciting and happy experience. However, it can also become an unpleasant and expensive experience. Many people purchase puppies which quickly become ill or die. Others find that the breed or pedigree of the puppy they have purchased is not what they were promised.

The purchase of puppies is not covered by “lemon laws” like those covering the purchase of an automobile. It is particularly important that consumers be educated before making their purchase. Dr. Yvonne Bellay, State Humane Officer with the Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection, Division of Animal Health, suggests that people contemplating a new puppy consider these points:

- Does your lifestyle allow adequate time for a puppy? Many households have no one home for long periods

of time during the day to housebreak, train, and socialize a puppy.

- What breed of dog will best suit your needs? Breeds with long, thick coats will require more grooming. Large dogs will require more room for housing and are more expensive to feed. Some breeds are very energetic and will require more time and attention for exercise.
- Can you afford a dog? All well cared for dogs will require some expense. Routine vaccinations and examinations are necessary to keep the animal healthy. Spaying and neutering are beneficial procedures that will incur some costs. Any dog may at some time become ill or injured and require costly veterinary care. Some breeds require periodic professional grooming, and acceptable quality dog food may be

more expensive than you think.

- Have you given adequate thought to the decision to obtain a pup? Do not make impulse purchases; make an informed decision. Take advantage of the many resources available to obtain information. Talk to veterinarians and reputable breeders, read books from the library or bookstore, and talk to owners of dogs similar to the type you are considering.
 - Do you know where the puppy is from? Take a good look at the environment the puppies have been kept in. Is it clean? Are the animals healthy and in good condition? If possible, see the parents of the puppies, at least the mother, to get an idea of what the puppy will be like as an adult. If the puppy is being adopted from a humane society shelter, the staff
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may be able to provide helpful information about the puppy.

- Is the breeder reputable? **It is not a good idea to obtain a puppy from someone who insists upon bringing the puppy to you (to a parking lot or other meeting place).** Reputable, conscientious breeders welcome questions and visits from prospective owners.

- What sort of guarantee, if any, comes with the puppy? Make sure that you have a written guarantee, not just promises. Be sure to understand what recourse you have if the puppy should become ill or other problems arise. If the seller is making claims about what will or will not be covered be sure to get specifics in writing. Do not make assumptions based

upon what you think should be covered.

For more information or to file a complaint, contact the Bureau of Consumer Protection at:

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TTY: (608) 224-5058

E-MAIL:

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